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ABSTRACT

An inservice training program designed to help teachers identify culturally different gifted students is described in this report, which provides specific information about identifying gifted Native Americans. Introductory material summarizes some research on the learning and behavioral characteristics of Native Americans as they differ from the predominant culture. The findings reported include reliance on non-verbal communication, use of undetailed verbal accounts, noncompetitiveness, belief in mythology rather than science, preference for anonymity and submissive behavior, and superior visual discrimination and fine motor skills. The remainder of the report outlines an inservice model which includes information on Native American values and learning/thinking styles, referral characteristics of gifted Native American students, screening and assessment procedures, culturally fair testing practices, and goals of the gifted program. Referral characteristics discussed include perceptiveness in judging environmental situations, strong creative abilities, and leadership skills within the individual's own cultural group. Lists of recommended tests include 12 tests of cognitive thinking, 4 of creative thinking, 3 of affective skills, and 7 qualitative measures such as student grades and parent questionnaires. The report's 17-item reference list is augmented by an appended bibliography which lists over 70 references on the culturally gifted individual; 23 are specific to American Indians and 14 to Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Information for the classroom teacher and handouts for teachers are also appended. (JHZ)

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IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED CHILDREN
AMONG THE AMERICAN INDIAN POPULATION:
AN INSERVICE MODEL

May 1986

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this article are to explore the learning and behavioral characteristics of the Native American and how these characteristics are related to the identification of gifted children; to familiarize educators with less culturally biased tests; and to recommend identification and eventual programming practices.

IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED CHILDREN
AMONG THE AMERICAN INDIAN POPULATION:
AN INSERVICE MODEL

Introduction

Any good school district recognizes the need to meet the cognitive, creative and affective needs of all its students. That recognition has been especially fruitful in the creation of programs in gifted education. Many districts across the United States have used primarily the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Revised (WISC-R) as a means of identifying gifted children (Chambers, Barron & Sprecher, 1980). It has been argued, however, that this type of assessment instrument has a strong bias in favor of white, Anglo-Saxon, middle-class children, while culturally different children are handicapped when taking this intelligence test as the sole method of determining giftedness.

The content- mainly analytical- and standard setting are inappropriate to American Indian populations, and the test norms do not include members of that group. Generally, researchers contend that the verbal section of the WISC-R is highly biased against it, although the performance results for Indian children are more within the national norms (Hynd, 1979). Cundick (1970) perceived that the block design, object assembly and coding portions of the test are more culturally fair; the major drawback of these sections is the timing, which requires rapidity as well as organized

thinking. Therefore, Indian children, who are generally noncompetitive, passive and lacking in time specificity, might not show their true potential in this type of activity.

From the psychological standpoint, Sattler (1974) summarizes the handicaps faced by minority children when tested on standard I.Q. tests. He states that minority children are handicapped in terms of motivation to do well (competitiveness), practice in test-taking, reading required to complete the test, rapport with an examiner of another cultural background, failure to recognize the achievement aspects of testing, and variety of verbal skills needed for "successful" performance.

In 1984 the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC) was also employed by some school psychologists as an assessment device used in the identification of gifted children. Kaufman contends that the K-ABC is culturally fairer than the WISC-R because it relies heavily on nonverbal skills and keys in on information processing, rather than just information. In addition, norms for the Kaufman test are representative for subpopulations as well as the dominant cultural group (Kaufman & Kaufman, 1983).

The purposes of this article are to explore the learning and behavioral characteristics of subculture groups and how these characteristics are related to the identification of gifted children; to familiarize educators

with less culturally biased tests; and to recommend identification practices.

BEHAVIORAL AND LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS

The ways in which children learn depend on many factors. The two chief influences come from the school and the home, and ideally the tasks of imparting learning and thinking styles, as well as values orientation, should be balanced between the two.

However, Baldwin (1978), Sattler (1974) and Martinson (1974) have found that learning and thinking styles among culturally different groups often vary from the norm of the dominant culture. For example, parents may not speak English, and therefore may not be able to communicate effectively with their children. Bilingual children face a lack of consistency if one language is spoken exclusively at home and the other at school. The physical environment at home may lack toys or stimulating learning materials; even when such materials are present, home responsibilities may limit the time available for imaginative play and even homework. Similarly, the children may be shortchanged on stimulating cultural experiences. The minority subculture's standards may conflict with those of the dominant culture. Finally, children's self-comparisons with those in the dominant culture may cause low self-esteem.

These characteristics may have been found to be common among members of various cultural minorities. More specifically, research indicates that Indian children

approach home, school and community situations differently from most middle-class white students. Connelly (1985) describes the American Indian's verbal expressive and receptive characteristics: soft speech patterns; short, undetailed accounts of events, leading to underestimation of oral language ability; appearance of weakness in understanding oral language, since Indians rely heavily on nonverbal communication; and nonlinear communication.

Ross (1982) discusses both verbal and behavioral attributes:

American Indians' sentence structure emphasizes the verb rather than the noun. Symbols, rather than the alphabet are frequently used to record tribal history. Often the Indian will laugh at a serious problem rather than becoming angry or upset, indicating aloofness. Perceptive skills are usually well-developed, often from interest and practice in hunting, tracking and scouting. Emphasis on ceremonial and cultural events exercises the unconscious mind.

Hynd (1979) addresses the noncompetitiveness of the American Indian. Importance is placed upon values of cooperation and harmony within the environment. Individual accomplishments are not important; it is the individual's contribution to the group that is important. In addition, Hynd notes that, under the Indians' concept of time, the present rather than the future is considered to be of greater importance, and time is not a priority in planning.

Sattler (1974) cites the Indians' noncompetitive nature, belief in mythology rather than science, and preference for anonymity and submissive behavior. He notes that Indians are more successful on the Performance vs. Verbal Scales of the WISC-R. Coding is especially high when time limits are not used.

The review of the research by Cattey (1980) centers around the Indian's right-hemispheric dominance:

Visual discrimination skills are very strong and fine motor skills are very well developed. Among academic skills spelling (visual imagery) is generally strong and geometric designs are easily used. Skills are often learned through imitation, direct visual and tactile experience; modeling lessons are effective instructional methods since Indians learn best by doing.

CREATING AN INSERVICE MODEL

An inservice model for identifying culturally different children would involve the following procedures:

INSERT MODEL HERE

FIGURE 1

TEACHER INSERVICING

The teacher of the gifted and the director of special services would meet with classroom teachers, counselors and principals at each elementary school in a district. At that time, the inservice participants would gain information on values and customs, family influence, and learning and thinking styles, as well as how these factors relate to the school environment, academic performance and intelligence test score results. The identification procedure for the culturally different students would be presented, along with a brief description of alternative and less biased assessment tools that could be employed to recognize students' skills in the cognitive, creative and affective realms. In addition, teachers would be informed of the timetable for the screening/assessment phase of the model.

NOMINATION OF STUDENTS FOR TESTING

Teachers, parents and students would be invited to participate in the nomination of potentially gifted students. Parent participation may require special outreach efforts.

In nominating American Indian pupils for screening, Baldwin (1981) suggests that teachers look for the following characteristics in their pupils:

- Highly developed perceptiveness in judging environmental situations, not by cues and skills taught in school, but in a "streetwise" way.
- Strong creative abilities.
- Understanding of cause-and-effect relationships.
- Superior visual abilities and hand-eye coordination.
- Leadership skills within the child's own cultural group
- Use of colorful and persuasive language among their cultural peers.

The above-mentioned skills fit into the six areas of giftedness as follows:

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

Teachers must take into account the strongest points of each individual child. For example, if a student shows characteristics that suggest giftedness in primarily artistic areas, he or she should not necessarily be placed in a program for the intellectually gifted.

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Qualitative and quantitative data would be gathered during the screening and assessment phase. The data would address abilities in the cognitive, creative and affective realms. The instruments (listed in appendix) include a

variety of tests and surveys identified as possible assessment tools to be used in the identification process. Depending upon the cultural group being screened/assessed, instruments maybe substituted for one another so that the best picture of the learning potential of the student in question can be observed.

INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

DETERMINATION OF PLACEMENT

All data would be placed on the Student Assessment Data Sheet (Frasier, 1984), which would include the name of the qualitative and quantitative test instruments and the student's scores on each test or sub-test. The profile serves as a method of giving the multi-disciplinary team an overview of the student's cognitive, creative and affective strengths and weaknesses. The multidisciplinary team would review each profile to determine student placement in the gifted program.

PLACEMENT IN THE GIFTED PROGRAM

If a student meets the necessary criteria for placement in the gifted program, the classroom teacher, principal, parents, student and the teacher of the gifted would be notified. Before programming can occur, the teacher of the gifted program, would review all screening and assessment data, using that information, along with the information on cultural background (family influence, learning and thinking

styles, values and customs), to plan critical, creative and affective skill activities for each individual student.

Hinnig and Zuke (1981), in their review of the literature regarding the programming of culturally different gifted students, suggested the following considerations in developing a program for culturally different gifted students:

- Building on student strengths then remediate weaknesses
- Assisting students in developing pride in their work
- Matching learning and thinking styles to learning activities
- Making the curriculum applicable to real life situations whenever possible
- Enhancing the creative thinking and creative problem solving skills of the student
- Working on cognitive development using a building-block approach, beginning with lower-level of cognitive development and working toward higher levels
- Making parents aware of the type of activities and skills the program is attempting to foster

Some students will not meet the necessary criteria for placement in a gifted program. When this occurs, the classroom teacher, principal, parents and students would be informed of the results. In this case, the student's needs would continue to be met in the regular classroom setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In assessing traditional procedures for identifying gifted minority students, Sattler (1974) recommends using a wide range of mental tasks; establishing separate norms for various cultural groups; and understanding how students' cultural background affects their learning and thinking styles. Bernal (1980) adds relying more heavily on Renzulli's definition of giftedness (1978) as above-average intelligence, task commitment and creativity rather than I.Q. alone; employing assessment tools favoring culturally different students; employing approaches that consider many areas of ability; inventories; self-report, case histories and autobiographical information; language proficiency tests and Piagetian-oriented assessment measures. Martinson (1974) suggested a list of assessment tools, and Richert (1981) discussed many such tools in detail. A detailed list of test instruments is given in the appendix.

Once gifted Indian children are identified, activities and strategies toward their advancement should include games, simulations and role-playing; holistic thinking activities, particularly activities requiring high nonverbal fluency; career awareness programs; counseling; and practice in leadership skills that involve problem-solving. Remember that Indian children focus on people and things rather than facts and that they relate strongly to home and community.

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APPENDIX
TEST INSTRUMENTS

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Cognitive Thinking

Wechsler Intelligence Test for Children (Revised)

Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children

Stanford Binet (Revised)

Leter Intelligence Test

Cartoon Conservation Test

Circus (grades K-3)

Columbia Mental Maturity Test

Goodenough Drawing Test

Raven Progressive Matrices

Stallings' Environmentally Based Screening

Piagetian Assessment tools

Bender Gesalt

Creative Thinking

Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (figural)

Alpha Biographical Inventory

Thinking Creatively with Sounds and Words

Creativity Test for Children (Guilford)

Affective Skills

Piers Harris Self Concept

GIFFI/GIFTS

Personality Inventory for Children

QUALITATIVE DATA

Cognitive Thinking

School Grades

Behavioral Rating Scale (Intellectual)-Renzulli-Hartman

Scale for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of
Superior Students

Creative Thinking

Seattle Project Parent Questionnaire

Things My Child Likes To Do (Renzulli)

Behavioral Rating Scale (creativity)- Renzulli-Hartman

Scale for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of
Superior Students

Affective Skills

Behavioral Rating Scale (motivation)- Renzulli-Hartman

Behavioral Rating Scale (leadership)- Renzulli-Hartman

IDENTIFICATION MODEL
IDENTIFICATION OF THE CULTURALLY DIFFERENT
GIFTED STUDENT

TEACHER INSERVICE

-I.D. PROCEDURE
-Characteristics of
Culturally Different
Gifted Students

NOMINATION

TEACHERS
STUDENTS
PARENTS

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Qualitative Data ↔ Quantitative Data

COGNITIVE
CREATIVE
AFFECTIVE

DETERMINATION OF PLACEMENT

ANALYSIS OF
DATA

VIA

STUDENT ASSESSMENT
DATA SHEET

REGULAR PROGRAM
WITH A-T PROGRAM

Teacher, student
and parents are
notified. A-T
teacher plans
appropriate program
for the student

REGULAR PROGRAM
PLACEMENT

Student's needs
are met in the
regular classroom

TYPES OF GIFTEDNESS (95-961)

FIGURE 2

<u>CHARACTERISTICS</u>	INTELLECT.	ACADEMIC	CREATIVITY	ARTS	LEADERSHIP	KINESTHETICS
"STREETWISE"	XX		XX		XX	
AUDITORY/ VISUAL SKILLS	XX	XX		XX		
PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE	XX				XX	
SEES CAUSE- EFFECT RELATIONSHIPS	XX	XX	XX		XX	
USES PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITIES	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	
PAYS ATTENTION TO DETAIL		XX		XX		
SUPERIOR EYE-HAND COORDINATION				XX		XX
LEADERSHIP SKILLS	XX				XX	

I. INTELLECTUAL/
ACHIEVEMENT

WISC-R
BINET
K-ABC
CARTOON CONSERVATION
CIRCUS TEST
COLUMBIA MENTAL MATURITY
RAVENS
DRAW-A-PERSON
SOI-LAT
PIAGETIAN ASSESSMENT
STALLINGS ENVIROMENTALLY
BASED SCREENING
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
TESTS

SELECTED INPUT FROM
I. AND II.

MULTIPLE CRITERIA *
I.D. MODEL
(FRASIER, 1984)
or
SYSTEM OF MULTICULTURAL
PLURISTIC ASSESSMENT
(SOMPA)
or
BALDWIN I.D. MATRIX
(BIM)

FIGURE THREE
II. CREATIVE/BEHAVIORAL

TORRANCE TESTS OF CREATIVE
THINKING
TEACHER NOMINATION
PARENT NOMINATION
STUDENT NOMINATION
SCALE OF RATING THE
BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS
OF STUDENTS (REZZULLI)
GIFTS
GIFFI
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL
CASE STUDIES
SEATTLE PROJECT PARENT
QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTE: RICHERT, 1981 DISCUSSES
MANY OF THESE ASSESSMENT
TOOLS IN DETAIL

* USED IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

INFORMATION FOR THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

APPENDIX A

Topic: Identification of Culturally Different Students

This year we would like to screen possible candidates for the A-T program from our culturally different population. Often times, these students are not referred for possible placement due to poor English skills, work habits and other learning characteristics that do not parallel those of the dominant culture. This omission is not done intentionally, but rather due to the lack of awareness of the value systems and learning styles that these students bring from the home environment.

Therefore, the attached material might make you more of aware of characteristics common to these children. The identification process of these students will vary somewhat from our normal procedures. Listed below is the plan that we are suggesting:

1. The classroom teacher gives us the name of their best candidate.
2. The screening process begins: (Miss Florey)
 - a. Ravens Progressive Matrices (group tested- approximately 45 minutes) nonverbal thinking skills

- b. Draw-A Person (group administered) 15-20 minutes
 - c. Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (group administered - 30 minutes)
 - d. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (individually administered- 30 minutes)
 - e. During this process the classroom teacher will be asked to complete the Renzulli-Hartman (all sections)
 - f. During this process the Chapter One teacher will also be asked to complete all sections of the Renzulli Hartman for all nominees currently in the Chapter One Program
 - g. During the process the playground aides (2) will be asked to complete selected sections of the Renzulli Hartman
3. The results of the screening process will be placed on a profile sheet. If a student's overall profile indicates superior abilities they will move onto the testing phase with Dr. Dorf.
4. The classroom teacher will be notified of student status.
5. Dr. Dorf will administer the K-ABC to those students exhibiting superior skills in the Screening Phase.

6. The entire profile will be reviewed and placement will/will not occur.
7. The classroom teacher will be consulted about the programming parameters for each student who qualifies.

Depending upon the abilities, communication skills and the academic needs of the student, A-T contact time will vary.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

1. Non-competitive nature.
2. Prefers anonymity and submissive behavior.
3. Good at spatial/perceptual tasks.
4. Lacks time-specific concept.
5. Approaches learning tasks in a holistic manner.
6. Speaks English in school and Mexican at home. Therefore English skills will not develop as quickly.
7. Superior eye-hand coordination.
8. Exhibits leadership skills when interacting with own cultural group.
9. May have strong creative abilities.
10. Is probably a visual learner.
11. Has the ability to judge environmental situations by the

use of cues and perceptions not taught in the school
(streetwise)

12. Remembers details of "everyday" events.

13. Often distrust authority.

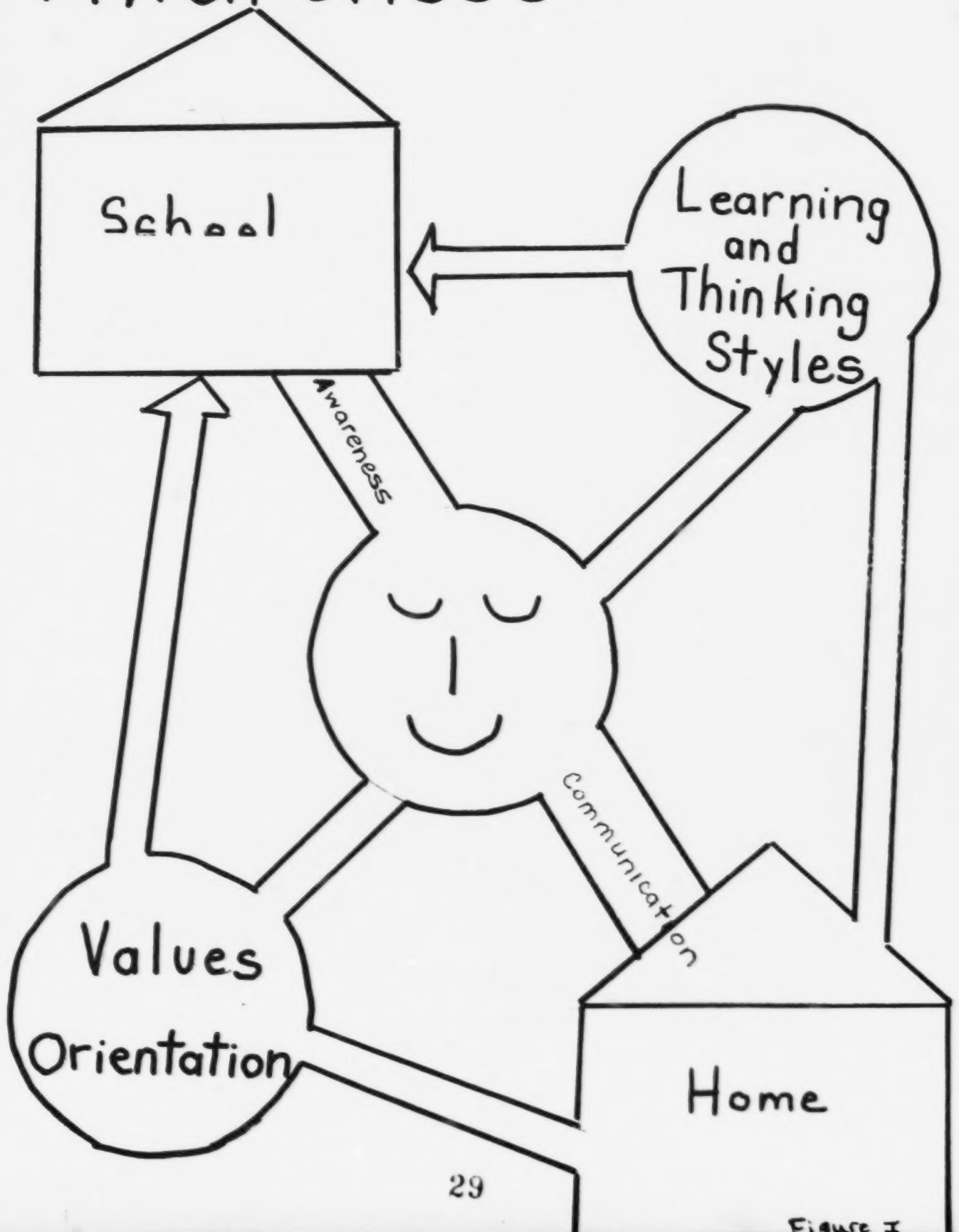
14. Are physically oriented and learn well through the
manipulation of materials

15. Learns better through games and role-play activities

16. Are community and family-oriented

17. Often has poor self-concept which can lead to defensive
behavior

Awareness



Teacher Nomination

Characteristics

Perceptive - Streetwise

Strong Creative
Abilities

Understands
Cause-Effect
Relationships



Superior Visual
Abilities

Superior Eye-Hand Coordination

Leadership Skills in Own Cultural Group

Uses Colorful Language with Peers

Assessment

Richert, 1981
discusses many of
these assessment
tools in detail

I.

- Intellectual/
Achievement
- WISC-R
 - K-ABC
 - Binet
 - Leiter
 - Cartoon Conservation
 - Cattell Culture Fair
 - Circus (K-3)
 - Columbia Mental Maturity
 - Goodenough Drawing
 - Raven Matrices
 - Stallings' Environmentally
Based Screening
 - SOI-LAT
 - Piagetian Assessment
 - Language Proficiency

- Selected
Input
- Baldwin I.D.
Matrix [BIM]
 - Creative Binet
 - System of
Multicultural
Pluralistic Assess.
[SOMPA]
 - Multiple Criteria
I.D. Model
(Fraser, 1985)

II.

- Creative/
Behavioral
- Torrance Test of
Creative Thinking (F)
 - Teacher nomination
 - Parent nomination
 - Student nomination
 - Scale of Rating the
Behavioral Characteristics
of Superior Students
 - G.I.F.T.S.
 - G.I.F.F.I.
 - Autobiographical
material
 - Case study

Figure III

Programming

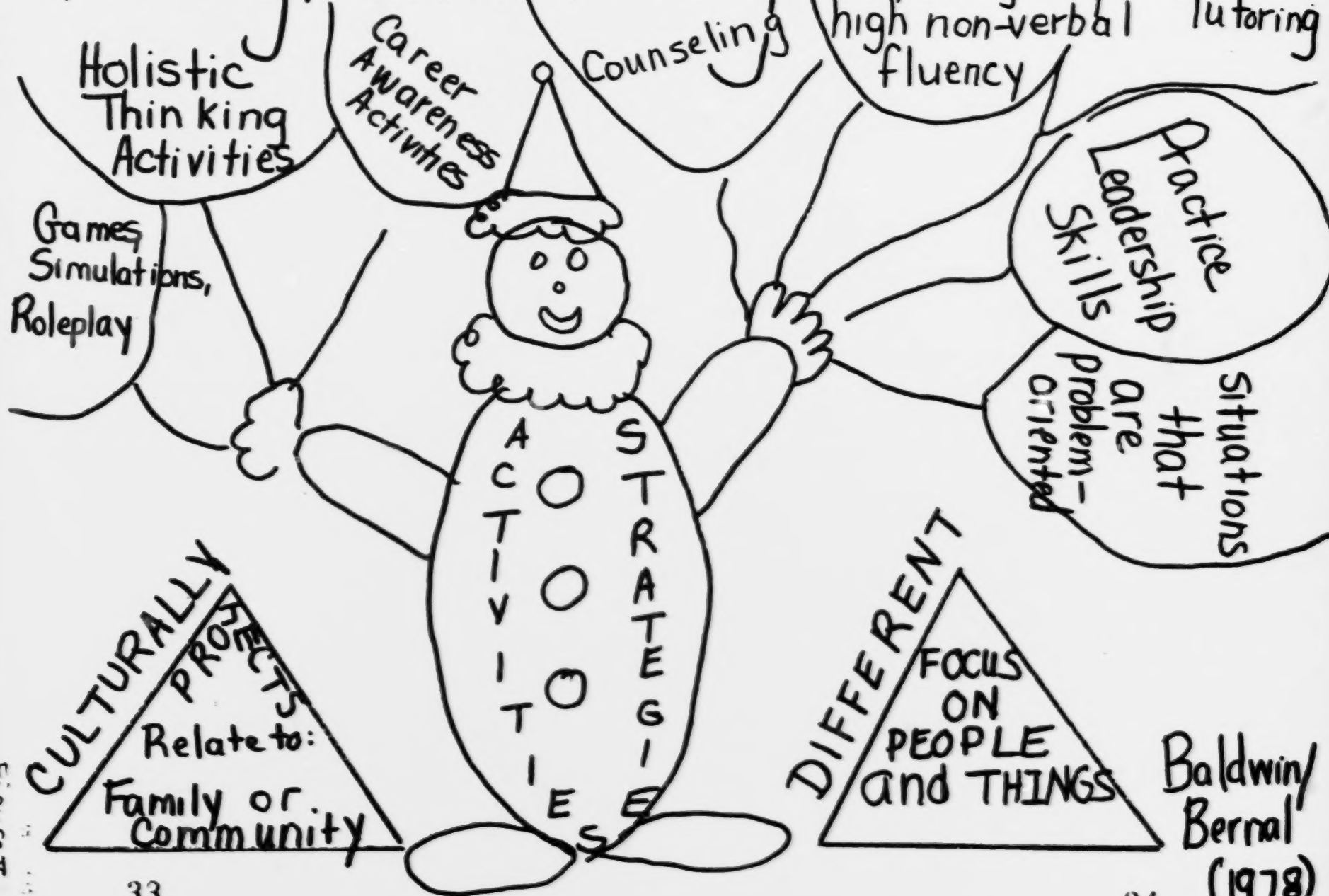


Figure 2

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